



NEWS RELEASE

NEBRASKA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (NEMA) – 2433 NW 24th STREET – LINCOLN, NE 68524-1801

Joint Information Center (JIC)

Daily Update

September 22, 2013, 11 a.m., CDT

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Records Set as Floodwater Continues East

LINCOLN, Neb. – Nebraska Emergency Management Agency continues to monitor the potential for flooding along the South Platte, North Platte and the Platte Rivers in Nebraska. The National Weather Service has continued Flood Warnings along the rivers until further notice.

The river at North Platte reached a new record of 14.14 feet 7 a.m. Sunday above the previous record of 14 feet according to the National Weather Service. This gauge is expected to maintain this level through Sunday before receding.

“The moderate flood level is having minimal impacts to North Platte areas along the river although it is pushing backwash into sewer and storm drains,” said **Nebraska Emergency Management Assistant Director Al Berndt**. “Continued caution is urged for anyone in the area of the South Platte, North Platte and Platte Rivers as river levels could remain at higher levels through the rest of the month.”

Dawson County Emergency Manager Brian Woldt said “water is flowing through Gothenburg and there are no major threats. Water was pooling in the median on I-80 but won’t affect the interstate. No businesses are threatened at this time. Flood water has not entered the south channel yet.

Buffalo County Emergency Manager Darin Lewis said they are not seeing any major flows yet.

“Citizens and businesses along the river have been informed,” Lewis said. “We knocked on 300 doors along river to deliver fliers with information and will finish distributing information Sunday. We’re waiting for water. First responders have been informed. I think we’ll be fine based on what we have seen upstream. We are asking citizens to report anything they see.”

At Brady the river is on the rise and expected to crest today at record state of 9.6 feet Sunday morning the river was at 9.48 feet or moderate flood stage. Minimal impacts are expected in this area as the water moves through.

The Cozad gauge west of Lexington read 3.35 feet at 7 a.m. CDT Sunday. This gauge is expected to reach 7.6 feet (minor flood stage) Monday night or early Sunday. Minimal impacts are expected. Grand Island is where the Flood Warning ends. The crest is expected to reach it by Thursday at a height of 6.11 feet action stage with minimal impacts; record for this gage is 8.0 feet.

The sections below, and others, will be included in the daily release sent by NEMA for the duration of this event.

NEMA

A NEMA field team of six and the NEMA Mobil Operations Center is positioned at North Platte to work with local emergency managers as water rises along the South Platte River.

The State Emergency Operations Center continues to operate at NEMA's headquarters in Lincoln. NEMA staff is assisting the public and officials along the South Platte River respond to the flooding, and providing information to the NEMA field team. Also working closely with NEMA staff are several state agencies including, Nebraska National Guard, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Health & Human Services, Department of Environmental Quality, State Fire Marshal, Nebraska State Patrol and Nebraska Department of Roads, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission.

Nebraska Department of Natural Resources

NDNR staff continue to complete measurements and project where floodwater could impact communities.

University of Nebraska Extension

The University of Nebraska Extension assembled a variety of written and video resources in response to Missouri River flooding in 2001 that can be found at <http://flood.unl.edu>. The resources provide research based information and education to the citizens of Nebraska. The material addresses issues related to homes, water wells, septic systems, farms, home landscapes and family financial and emotional stress.

Nebraska State Patrol

The Nebraska State Patrol reminds motorists that the floodwater has displaced wildlife along the river. Motorists should pay extra attention when traveling in the affected areas as wildlife, especially deer, could be seeking high ground and crossing roadways.

The Patrol also wants to remind motorists to be on the lookout for road closures and large equipment on roadways due to flood related work.

National Weather Service:

For current information on river gauges and levels use this web link:

<http://water.weather.gov/ahps/region.php?state=ne>

National Guard

Four Nebraska National Guardsmen in two Humvees have responded to the South Platte River area to support local emergency operations. National Guard Soldiers are working with the NEMA field team collecting information in the flooded area.

Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR): <http://www.transportation.nebraska.gov/511/9-2013-flood/info.pdf>

Road Closures:

I-80 STATEWIDE is OPEN.

The L25B from I-80 north to Big Springs is **open**.

The L51B link from I-80 north to Roscoe is **closed**.

The L51A link from I-80 to Brule is currently open, but NDOR is monitoring a surge in flow, and the link may have to be closed again depending on the surge.

NDOR will continue to monitor areas as the flow continues to move downstream.

Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality urges people to avoid contact with floodwaters. The public is cautioned about contact with water in the river, standing pools or backwaters which could be contaminated.

Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) has activated its flood webpage at:
<http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/flooding.aspx>

Private water well owners in soon-to-be-flooded areas should take precautions to prevent their drinking water from being contaminated. Well owners should take the following steps if they believe their well will be impacted:

- Before taking the well out of service, store a supply of clean water
- Disconnect the power supply for the well. Consult a Nebraska-licensed well driller or pump installer if help is needed
- Perform actions necessary to make the well water-tight, including removing the well vent and replacing it with a water-tight plug, and sealing any visible joint openings with water-tight caulking or equivalent material

Tetanus Shots for People in Flooded areas

Tetanus immunization is recommended for all adults every 10 years. Exposure to floodwaters doesn't increase the risk of tetanus according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. However, if you get a severe wound or deep cut, check with your health care provider to see if you need a booster. Tetanus is an infectious disease, but it's not spread from one person to another. The bacteria that cause tetanus are found in the soil and usually enter the body through a wound. The infection is very serious and will involve a long hospital stay. Surviving tetanus disease doesn't create immunity. The only way to guarantee future protection is through immunization.

State Fire Marshal

State Fire Marshal staff is in the field monitoring the effects of rising water on propane storage and other fire hazards.

American Red Cross

As the water from Colorado flows into Nebraska, more than a dozen American Red Cross disaster action workers from North Platte, Kearney, Grand Island, Lincoln and Omaha continue to prepare for potential flooding in communities along the South Platte River.

Red Cross workers have met with Southern Baptist and UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) and are working closely with the Salvation Army Partners. In addition, the Red Cross is positioned to open shelters in nine communities along the South Platte River, should homeowners be forced out of their homes. Shelters will provide displaced residents with a safe place to stay, a place to sleep, a hot meal, minor first aid, referrals and a shoulder to lean on.

Shelter App: People can locate a shelter by calling 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767) between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m., or downloading the Red Cross Shelter App.

Anyone evacuating to a Red Cross shelter should bring essential items for each member of the family:

- Prescriptions and emergency medications
- Foods that meet unusual dietary requirements
- Identification to show residence is in affected area and important personal documents
- Extra clothing, pillows, blankets, hygiene supplies and other comfort items

- Supplies needed for children and infants, such as diapers, formula and toys
- Special items for family members who are elderly or disabled

www.redcross.org

Salvation Army

A North Platte Salvation Army emergency disaster services team is ready to help and another team from Kearney is on standby. Disaster services range from distributing food and clothing, to providing counseling and support, and sometimes even providing temporary shelter. <http://www.usc.salvationarmy.org/western>.

Oregon Trail Baptist Association

The Oregon Trail Baptist Association out of North Platte is also available to provide meals as needed.



[List of County Emergency Managers](#)

[List of Nebraska Local Health Departments](#)

For flooding information visit: <http://www.nema.ne.gov/newsroom/flooding-information.shtml>